

# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

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***For Immediate Release***

September 21, 2005

Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, William Mudge, Madison County State's Attorney, Preston Grubbs, Special Agent in Charge of the St. Louis Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration, Chris Sullivan, Chief of the Alton Police Department, Larry Washington, Resident Agent in Charge of the Fairview Heights Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms, and Captain Craig Koehler of the Illinois State Police announced today the dismantling of a major cocaine and crack cocaine distribution organization operating locally in Alton, Illinois, and surrounding areas. This investigation, national in scope, was the result of outstanding cooperation among federal, state, and local law enforcement in the Southern District of Illinois. The dismantling of an organization of this magnitude will have a significant impact on the reduction in the availability of cocaine in the Alton community and surrounding areas. To date, the operation has resulted in 30 individuals being indicted.

Indicted on September 8, 2005, in an 18-count indictment were:

Richard Pittman, age 29, of Alton, Illinois  
Tamiesha Williams, age 29, of Alton, Illinois  
Shirley Mae Pittman, age 29, of Alton, Illinois  
James E. Rollins Sr., age 56, of St. Louis, Missouri  
James E. Rollins Jr., age 35, of San Bernardino, California  
John Frost, age 28, of San Bernardino, California  
Rudy Slack, age 45, of Alton, Illinois  
Eric Spruill, age 34, of Alton, Illinois  
Alan Taylor, age 36, of Alton, Illinois  
Talia Pittman, age 30, of Alton, Illinois  
Veronica Marshall, age 48, of Alton, Illinois  
Shara Smith, age unknown, of Alton, Illinois

All defendants were charged with conspiracy to manufacture, distribute and possess with intent to distribute cocaine base, commonly known as "crack" cocaine. In addition, charged with distribution of cocaine base were: Richard Pittman, Tamiesha Williams, Shirley Mae Pittman, Rudy Slack, Eric Spruill; charged with distribution of cocaine were Richard Pittman, James Rollins Jr., James Rollins Sr., John Frost, and Shirley Mae Pittman, Rudy Slack, and Alan Taylor; charged with using a communication facility to commit the offense of conspiracy to distribute were Alan Taylor, Talia Pittman, Richard Pittman, Veronica Marshall, Shara Smith. Because it is alleged that the organization trafficked in more than 50 grams of crack cocaine, all defendants face a minimum sentence of 10 years imprisonment and a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

The Grand Jury also returned indictments against six other individuals as part of that same investigation:

Staci Leeanne McDade, age 22, of Alton, Illinois  
Shawn Porter, age 43, of Alton, Illinois  
Duane Bradford, age 33, of Alton, Illinois  
Donald Slack, age 42, of Alton, Illinois  
Anthony W. Easter, age 31, of Alton, Illinois  
Nathaniel Neal, age 49, of Alton, Illinois

McDade, Porter, Bradford, and Slack were charged with distribution of 5 grams or more of cocaine base, which charge carries a penalty of between 5 and 40 years imprisonment, to be followed by 4 years of supervised release, and a fine of up to \$2 million.

Easter and Neal were each charged with distribution of cocaine base. Neal was also charged with distribution of cocaine. They each face a maximum penalty of 20 years imprisonment, to be followed by 3 years of supervised release, and a fine of up to \$1 million.

This OCDETF operation has previously resulted in 12 other individuals having been indicted by Grand Juries in the Southern District of Illinois on charges ranging from the distribution of over 5 kilograms of cocaine to assaulting federal agents with the use of a firearm. These individuals were indicted between December of 2004 and February of 2005.

According to the United States Attorney, "These indictments show the powerful impact that the OCDETF program can have in bringing to justice the most serious drug offenders. The unified efforts of multiple agencies in the course of a year long investigation has produced charges against thirty individuals. Use of sophisticated investigative techniques has provided a unified method of attacking a major drug trafficking organization with members both here in Southern Illinois and elsewhere. It is a good day for the citizens of Alton."

The violations took place in Madison County, Illinois, between January 2003 and August 2005. *An indictment is a formal charge against a defendant. Under the law, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of a jury.*

The information for the Indictment was obtained in an investigation conducted by the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF). The Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force is a federal drug enforcement program that focuses attention and resources on the disruption and dismantling of major drug trafficking organizations. OCDETF provides a framework for federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to work together to target well-established and complex organizations that direct, finance, or engage in illegal narcotics trafficking and related crimes. Agencies involved in the investigation were the Drug Enforcement Administration, including the DEA St. Louis Division Mobile Enforcement Team, the Alton Police Department, the Metropolitan Enforcement Group of Southwestern Illinois, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms, and the Illinois State Police. The cases are being handled by Assistant United States Attorney J. Christopher Moore, Ranley R. Killian, and H. Michael Thompson.